

Survey of the Bible

Class 2: The Pentateuch (cont.)

Paul Burkhart

PART 1: Review

The Gospel

First, we anchored ourselves in our identity. We are the Resurrection people of God--those that have been joined to a Christ who has been obedient to the commands/story of Israel and has now joined us to himself. As the Resurrected One, He is the first citizen of the world to come and by trusting that he is the Messiah, he is the Creator, and he is Lord, and seeking to know him better and obeying him, we bring that future world into the present. *This* is our identity. Not what we believe about the Bible, as important as it is. So we should be generous, thoughtful, gracious, and charitable to brothers and sisters with very different views about the Bible, because, ultimately that is not who we are.

The Bible

In the last class, we talked about how we shouldn't think too highly of the Bible: it is not, as we sometimes say, the "Word" of God. The Word is a part of God that God uses the Bible to reveal, but not the Word itself. There's nothing special or mystical about this precise combination of these words on the page. The Bible is not divine. They are human words that, just like the Word in flesh, bear the marks and scars of the path it took to get to us.

But we also talked about how we should think *very* highly of the Bible, as it is the chief means by which God reveals Himself to us, actively and in the present, as we encounter Him and His Story. It is inspired, even in its copies and translations, because it is the meeting place of us and God, here and now. It does not "contain" the revelation of God, nor is it (I know, I know, contrary to what I said last week) the "revelation of God". It is a *means* by which God *reveals Himself, by His Spirit*.

The Israelites & the Bible

We also went through the history of those that wrote the Old Testament and the Old Testament itself. Long story short, this ethnic people ended up in the area of Canaan anywhere from the 1400s to 1200s B.C.E. They formed a monarchy, then divided into two Kingdoms, Israel in the North, and Judah in the South. They were each conquered and taken into exile. They were then allowed to return, but it wasn't quite like it was before.

Most scholars believe that the Old Testament, or at least what we'll be going through today was compiled and put together, somewhere between the exile and shortly after they returned. Not all of it was written then, but much of it was, and it was stitched together into the books we have today. There seems to be historical "cores" to many of the books, but they are "historical books" in the same way many other books were "historical" in ancient world--stylized, theologized, and mythologized. And this okay. This is how people did things back then. No Israelite would have thought that that idea did any "damage" to the God who reveals Himself in the Scripture.

PART 2: The Rest of the Pentateuch

The Books

Theologically, the Hebrews have exalted the first five books of the Bible as the *most* authoritative in their Scriptures. The "Pentateuch" (or "five scrolls") ends with the Israelites *just* about to enter the Promised Land, but not quite there.

Exodus

The name "Exodus" comes from the Greek title of the book, meaning "the way out". The book makes no claim to history. It never names the Pharaoh, it's terminology of geography, chronology, and events of the day are very generic. It's main focus is theological and proclamational, and so whatever historical core there is, passes through that filter.

Content:

Three parts: Israel & Egypt, Israel & Wilderness, Israel & Sinai. In Egypt there rises up a Pharaoh who forgets who Joseph was. He enslaves the Israelites and makes them build his pet building projects. Their numbers grow so large, he forces all the newborn males killed. Two Israelite women want to save one of the newborns, Moses, so they place him in a basket and float him down the Nile. He is found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in Pharaoh's household. As an adult he sees some Egyptian guard abusing one of the Israelites, and he kills him. He flees Egypt, finds a small tribe to live among and marries. One day, he is looking for a lost sheep and God speaks to Moses through a bush that burns, but is not consumed. He gives Moses his name--Yahweh, and calls him to save his people. He goes back, and there ensues a battle between the gods of Egypt and Yahweh. There are ten plagues, attacking all levels of creation and gods in Egypt, culminating in the death of the first-born. The Israelites are saved from this death by spreading the blood of a lamb on the doorposts, so that Death would "Pass over" them. Pharaoh releases them, and then leads them through a dramatic parting of the Red Sea to save them from attacking Egyptians, who he then kills in the crashing waves. They then travel through the Wilderness, receiving provision from God until they get to Mount Sinai. Moses goes up, receives the gift of the Law of God and the instructions of the tabernacle. He goes down from the mountain to see the Israelites worshipping a golden calf. He breaks the tablets in anger, and goes back up the mountain. He convinces God not to kill them all. God gives them some more laws. Moses comes back down, the Israelites build the tabernacle, and the book ends with God's presence filling the temple.

Background:

- Lots of Semitic people in Egypt. ca. 1700 B.C.E., there's a list of 95 household slaves in Egypt, over half the names are Semitic.
- The Israelite Laws are very similar to laws found of people that lived around the time of Moses, hinting at the ancient-ness of some of the parts.
- Moses is an Egyptian name.
- Scholars are split whether Thutmose II or Ramses II are the Pharaohs, but most lean towards Ramses, and many believe that there may have been two "mini-exoduses (exodi?)"--one during each of those Pharaoh's terms. This would help explain some of the

ambiguities of time and place in the book. It's a diverse historical core that led to the book. Although:

- Ramses II was known to be a particularly prideful Pharaoh.
- There were many slave escapes in the 1200s B.C.E.
- In the 1200s, there was a dramatic ethnic shift in the region of Palestine.
- The names of the Israelites mentioned in the book are most similar to names used in the 1200s B.C.E.
- There were *many* letters that have been uncovered from the Pharaoh of the 1400s, and *none* of them mention, even in passing, Israel.
- Ramses II's firstborn, it is known from archaeological evidence, died prematurely and in an unknown way.
- And the buildings described in Exodus as having been built by Israelite slaves could only have been done in the 1200s B.C.E.
- Either way, we know that by 1209 B.C.E., Israel was an established-enough entity to be listed among the enemies of Pharaoh Merneptah (the son of Ramses II) in 1209 B.C.E. This is the oldest reference outside the Bible to "Israel".
- There were portable tent-shrines for deities in several ancient Near Eastern societies at the time. The Tabernacle wasn't a new thing.

Purpose/Identity Formation:

- Moving from Pharaoh to Yahweh: from service to one to the other, from bondage to bonding.
- The Law: that passage (from 19 to 24) moves from narrative to law to narrative to law and back to narrative. It weaves the law into the story of Israel, making it intimate part of their identity and reinforcing the fact that it is a relational law not separate from the interaction of God who gave it.
- 34:6-7: "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and children's children to the third and fourth generation."
 - this is repeated *many* times in the OT, also explains the exile.
- The golden calf is talked about in Kings as the source and reason for why the Northern and Southern Kingdoms went into exile.

Interesting Bits:

- Hebrew root for "serve" appears 97 times in the book.
- Moses floats down the river in an "ark"-like thing.
- The slaves go from building temples for Pharaoh to building one for Yahweh, but out of glad obedience, not slavery.
- God travels to in the book. In the beginning, not very present. At the end, dwells among his people.
- The calf is not a rejection of Yahweh, per se.
- Longest fast in the Bible: Moses. 80 days. Two trips up Sinai.
- Mose's request to Yahweh to "Show me your glory", is answered by what is more or less a sermon on God's attributes.

Jesus/New Testament:

- Released from slavery to a prince of death, travel north through the "Red" Sea, to the Promised Land. But what comes before? Desert.
- Waters of Baptism
- Blood for Redemption:
 - Passover: duh.
 - The mercy seat: the Ark and Mary's vision of the tomb
 - The (blood) Red Sea: path to freedom for God's people, judgment for others
- Moses: demands freedom for God's people from the prince of slavery and death, leads people through the (blood) Red Sea up north through the desert to the promised land. Delivers law to people from Mountaintop → Sermon on the mount
- Ten Commandments = future tense. Not only commands for today, but God's promise of what he will bring about in the future.
- From the beginning of the book, Israel is "God's people". They are ordained a nation of priests to act as priests in this temple world, *for* the world. This Mosaic covenant is given to God's *already-elect* people, and the Law is a gift to people already redeemed by God, not the means by which they would be redeemed.

Application/Why Would You Go Here?:

- God's faithfulness in the desert: his testing/trying, the temptations inherent.
- Mercy/forgiveness: the tabernacle vs. the law.

- Central question(s): Who is sovereign? Pharaoh or Yahweh? Further, how do they exercise this Sovereignty? Pharaoh hears the cries of Israelites, is unmoved and blames them. God hears the cries of his people and responds, even "knowing" their suffering and inviting it into his own experience. This helps with God "changing his mind". In the end, this Sovereign God chooses to dwell with his people.
- 9:16: "Make my name resound through the whole earth". God's activity among his people has creation-wide purposes. Redemption/ Exodus/Wilderness leads to New Creation. Salvation is not simple. It's not for its own sake. It is for bigger ends than just your club. Liberation is not enough. Exodus is not enough. "The Journey" is not enough. We need a Promised Land. We need Home. Ours is a God who offers it.

Leviticus

The name means "relating to the priests". It's a weird book. Difficult to read with modern eyes and even more difficult to apply to one's life.

Content:

Opens up right where Exodus ends: at the doorstep of the tabernacle. Yahweh lays out for Moses all the requirements for priests and sacrifices in his tabernacle. Following this, they have a big ordination ceremony, but it turns really badly. Aaron's sons, mess up on this first time and are killed by Yahweh. Then God goes on telling Moses about the practical day to day living, religious structure of time and space, and the elements for use in the church service in which he wants his people to conduct themselves. There's one more narrative part about a young man who got in a fight and in the midst of it, cursed the guy he was fighting with and blasphemed "The Name" and is commanded by God to be taken out and stoned. Thematically, there's roughly four parts: cleanness vs. uncleanness, blood bringing about life, the theological structure of the year (festivals and sabbath/jubilee years), and a final declaration of blessings and curses to close us out.

Background:

- SO many parallels to other things. There's not many things that the Israelites say and prioritize in this book that *many* other ancient peoples weren't doing the same at the same time.
- Due to the blessing/curse pattern, this is probably more accurately thought of as a treaty literary structure rather than a law code.
- The Sumerian Cylinder B, of the ancient ruler Gudea, describes similar initiation festivals and the indwelling of their god Ningirsu and his consort Baba in their temple. Major contrasts with Israel, though. Ancient ritual: consecration and inauguration, as well as installation of physical idols *preceded* and *led to* a god dwelling there. Yahweh, though, indwells the temple *before* any ceremony and move *his very presence* into it rather than a mere image.
- Incense rituals were very precise, detailed, and specific, especially in Egypt to the God Amun-Re.
- In the ancient world, a god's name was equivalent to the god themselves and so blaspheming it was a serious offense. The Assyrians would cut out the tongues of those that would blaspheme the name of their god. Syrian treaties with other nations called for the death of anyone that did this to their god.
- The "Holiness Code" is thought to be much later.

Purpose/Identity Formation:

- Every ancient people needed a book of their laws. This is the Israelites'
- Leviticus provides for a "Jubilee year" every 50 years (or 49) where all land returned to the original family that owned it, release of servants, and debt was forgiven. This is because the land was Yahweh's, the people were Yahweh's servants, and all resources were a gift from Yahweh that rescued his people, and ultimately, the entire year was to remind that even time belongs to Yahweh.

Interesting Bits:

- Interestingly, the young man who is stoned is killed under the religious justification of "an eye for an eye" and "taking a human life". Harkens Jesus' thoughts on it.

Jesus/New Testament:

- The God who has decided to dwell *with* them, provides offerings *for* them, to restore the relationship
- In the midst of the part on life coming through the spilling of blood is the admonition for us to be holy as God is holy is, as well as God's command to love our neighbors. There's an intimate connection, it seems with blood sacrifice and love/holiness.
- What would it look like for a society to function in the way of Jubilee? Good question. There's no record of the Israelites ever having done this, although many other surrounding countries had similar practices whenever a new king took over. This harkens to when our new king will take over and announce a Jubilee of all nations at the end of all time.

Application/Why Would You Go Here?:

- Theologically, the sacrificial system, just like the Old Covenant, is still in effect. Jesus did not "abolish" these other aspects (as some people describe it). Rather he *relocates* them to more meaningful places: the "heart": which is the seat of the mind, will, and emotions. Jesus was the *ideal* sacrifice for this system that was *still in effect*, and in our union with him, we are now to be *living sacrifices* under this *still valid sacrificial system*.
- The "point" of Leviticus, from a New Testament standpoint, is that this is what our relating to God would have to look like, should it mostly be based on our own performance. We should read it and be humbled, that our God is so holy, so distinct and separate from us, as to need these requirements for us to be acceptable before him. It should lead us to worship our God for providing a way, through Jesus, for perfect obedience to be accomplished by a human, for all humans.

Numbers

Could be called "Wilderness, Part II". In fact, the Hebrew name for this book is "In the Wilderness". It marks the transition from an older generation of Israelites dying off and the newer generation rising up to prepare to move into the Promised Land.

Content:

Separated into three sections, separated by geography. It begins in Sinai, ends at the plains of Moab, and between the two is "the journey". The first section deals with the older generation. They are encamped at the base of Sinai and are preparing to leave. This is maybe the best ten chapters the Israelites ever have. Come chapter 11, they begin complaining, and punishments and plagues begin in response. Mose's family members oppose him, and Israelites don't believe that God can take them into the Promised Land. They send out twelve spies to look into the land and scope things out. All but two of the spies come back saying there's no way they can take the land because the people are too big. The people get pissed and rebel against Moses for bringing them this far and they can't even take the land. God decides to kill them all again, but Moses convinces him otherwise...again. God then declares judgment that no one from this generation of Israelites will go into the Promised Land. And so...they walk around the desert, waiting for all of them to die. Throughout this journey, there are many more rebellions, plagues, judgments, and death. Towards the end of this section, most of the old generation has died and the new generation is almost to adulthood, and things begin looking up. Then, in one chapter, three things happens that shakes Israel to their core: Miriam, Mose's sister and a major leader of the people dies; Moses and Aaron disobey God, and strike a rock to bring water to the people, rather than speaking to it as God commanded, and so they are judged so as not to bring the people into the Promised Land; and Aaron dies. It's here that this third starts coming to a close, and there begins to be some bright glimmers and hope as God gives them laws to follow once they're in the Promised Land, gives them some military victories along the way, and speaks hope and encouragement through oracles to the people. It's at this point the last third of the book begins after the final member of that original generation dies and the new generation can now prepare to enter the Promised Land. The question that lingers here: can this generation be more faithful than the last? Well, this generation does very well. When they encounter situations where the previous generation rebelled or grumbled, they navigate the waters well. Life and hope mark this section, as opposed to rebellion and death in the last. The book ends with this new generation not "in the wilderness at Sinai" as the book began), but "in the plains of Moab", just about to enter the Promised Land and take it over.

Background:

- You can be forgiven for not thinking this book flows very well. It doesn't. The book of numbers has greatest variety of literary forms of any book of the Bible. Some commentators count more than fourteen different genres of writing in this one book.
- This book, therefore, seems to have gone through a lot of literary development and editing. One commentary called it the "junk drawer" of the Pentateuch, where it seems like later editors just tossed in everything that didn't fit in the other Pentateuchal books.
- The earliest, most ancient sections of the book are thought to be the poetic sections.

Purpose/Identity Formation:

- By the end of the book, the feeling of this new generation matches the feeling of those Israelites in exile: with an older generation having died off, longing to be in the land God has promised them, but with foreign powers standing in their way.
- Throughout the book, there is a determined effort to show the equality of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Some believe this was to protest attempts by leaders (like Ezra and Nehemiah) after the exile to prefer the exiles who were originally exiled from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, rather than the northern Kingdom of Israel (which was more rebellious and fell first).

Interesting Bits:

- This is the book where God talks through a donkey. It's a weird book for that to happen in, but this is where it is. Tales of talking animals were common in the ancient world (see Genesis 1), and usually the animals spoke warning, irony, or satire. Here, it is irony and warning, as Balaam is supposed to be a "seer of the gods" and doesn't "see" the angel of God standing in front of him, while his donkey does. It's supposed to mock this pagan's "ability" while re-asserting God's sovereignty. The donkey sees what the seer is supposed to, and doesn't.
- We laugh at this, but the donkey belongs to Balaam, a man God uses as an oracle to speak peace, hope, and encouragement to the people. His four climactic proclamations are what bring this section

of death to an end. It's supposed to show just how far God would go, even upending the natural order of the natural world in order to speak peace and bring about the fulfillment of his promises to his people.

- Speaking of, there's an interesting inscription that's been found in this area, dating to a few hundred years after these events that talk of a "Balaam son of Beor" (the same description as in the Bible), who has a frightening night vision that a time is about to come of drought, darkness, death, and the upending of the natural order where small birds attack bigger ones, the deaf hear again, and fools have insightful visions. Balaam (it's thought) then curses the gods responsible for these things and asks pleads with the local goddesses Ashtar and Sheger to bring prosperity instead. It's believed they complied with this request, inspiring the building of the temple and the inscription inside of it on which this story is found.
- After the new generation takes over, there's not a single Israelite that's recorded as dying.
- The numbers used in Numbers are really big. Big armies, big populations, big death. There is little to no chance that these are literal. The math, geography, logic, and the Bible itself do not support it (for example, for the census numbers to be right, every Israelite woman would have had to have more than 27 children each. That's more than *any* other individual is recorded as having in the entire Bible). This is one example of how much of the content of the Old Testament is more for theological reasons than historical. In this case, it may be show the prosperity of God's people, or to show how God had made the Israelites as "numerous as the stars" as he had promised to Abraham. And this is okay. No Israelite would have thought these were "lies" or damaging to the place of Scripture among the people. Let this be a baby-step in letting us see the humanity of the Bible.

Jesus/New Testament:

- Especially in the last laws that God gives the Israelites, you see a theme begin to develop of *Law as Promise*. You see this in the future tense of the Ten Commandments (as said earlier), but you can also see this in the New Covenant and the Spirit. Jeremiah says, that the New Covenant is where God will place his "Law" in our hearts. Peter preaches that this this promise has been fulfilled when the Spirit is in

our hearts. The Law=Promise=Spirit=the Spirit of the Resurrected Christ to bring about the future, promised New Creation. And so, the Resurrected, citizen of the New Creation Jesus Christ himself *is* the Fulfilled Law that dwells within us, to bring us there to that world, and to bring that world to us here.

- The sin of Moses that led to his exclusion from the Promised Land wasn't simply hitting the rock with the stick, as opposed to telling it to bring water. It was that he, with Aaron's consent, tells the people "Shall we bring water for you out of this Rock?" This is a vivid example of the original sin and Jesus' obedience: incorrect "imaging" of God. We are to act as God's "images" in the world, not as gods ourselves. Moses takes responsibility for divine provision, ascribing the divine power to himself. He was not the hands and feet of the Word of God, rather he expected God to be the hands and feet of *his* words. Jesus was the perfectly obedient "image" of God in the world, we are now joined to him, and so have the guarantee of entering into God's True Promised Land.
- Also note: even when Moses offered a wrong attribution for why these things were happening, God *still* moved among his people. Might this be a hint for when the Israelites ascribe some of their *other* actions to the decree of God?

Application/Why Would You Go Here?:

- You have to read the book in its *entirety* to really glean the fruit of it. Taken as isolated parts can be disturbing or unnecessarily difficult to us. Taken as a whole, the God we know most fully in Jesus is on full display.
- To see how God responds to us in the midst of our rebellion. Many times he won't save us from it's immediate consequences, but ultimately shows himself faithful to his promises.
- To remind us of what our rebellion brings about in the world. Sin brings about disease, death, mourning, and distance from the promise of God.
- The new generation that re obedient are not "squeaky clean", naive "obeyers". Rather they have to nuance the law of God and respond wisely and shrewdly. They seem to navigate the "grey" of life well. Even when some of them sin or grumble, it is not a wholesale, complete rejection of God. We see what a realistic obedient life can look like.

Deuteronomy

As the Pentateuch closes out, we're left with these final words of Moses. "Deuteronomy" comes from the Septuagint translation of a mistaken translation of the phrase "a copy of this law". They instead translated it to *deuteronomium toto*, or "this second law", and so we get the name "Deuteronomy", meaning "second law". It concludes a major era of Israelite life before their next major phase begins in the Promised Land. Deuteronomy acts as an appropriate bridge between Genesis-Numbers, and Joshua-Kings, as a pause in the narrative to remind us of where we've been, and foreshadow where we're going.

Content:

Deuteronomy is, essentially, four speeches Moses gives, followed by a mix of narratives and final sayings at the end. It picks up right where Numbers left off--in the plains of Moab. The new generation is about to go in and take the Promised Land, but before they do, a few things have to happen. Moses needs to give his final and best sermons he can muster up, and Moses has to die (remember his punishment). **Speech 1:** more or less retells Israel's story from Sinai (the end of Exodus) to this point (through Numbers) and demands that all the rebellion that marked that time cease. **Speech 2:** restates the Ten Commandments, reminds them of the covenant that undergirds those commandments and exhorts them to keep the commandments, and then for the bulk of the book, applies each of the commandments into specific cases. The first half of these pertain to religious ceremonies, the second half to political and civil matters. **Speech 3:** lays out a new covenant to which this new generation will declare allegiance. It includes a set of blessings and curses for those that follow and break this covenant, respectively. **Speech 4:** shows how this new covenant is merely building off the old one at Sinai, and not something entirely new, and he lays out guidelines to place this new covenant at the core of their worship. The last three chapters offers us Moses singing his final exhortation, giving his farewell blessing, and then seeing the Promised Land from a hill and dying.

Background:

- Historically, at this time, Egypt was politically declining, and though they technically had Canaan under their control, they exerted no real authority in the area, allowing Israelites to settle there.
- The book clearly opens up saying that these words are being written *after* Moses dies, *after* the Israelites have entered Canaan. As clear of an indication that Moses did not write it as you can get.
- The end of the book talks of Mose's death and describes it as if it has been *many, many* years/centuries/generations that have gone by since this death, implying that this book was written *much* later on, and the writer isn't even trying to pretend otherwise.
- Deuteronomy is one of the books of the Bible that most clearly matches a set form and structure of a type of literature of the ancient world: treaties. There are two types of treaties that scholars are a little split on as to which Deuteronomy matches up with the best. One is earlier, around the time of Exodus events, one is later around the time of the Israelite kings. So, it seems that there is a really interesting mix of super old and much more recent parts to this book. Either way, scholars argue a lot about this. Just Google it if you care for more. There's plenty about it.
- Most scholars, though, believe most (if not all) of Deuteronomy was written around the time of Josiah. Josiah was a King in the Southern Kingdom that brought a great revival of obedience after the North was sent into exile by the Assyrians, and a generation before the South was. He began many reforms, and in the midst of these reforms, it is said he "discovered" this book of the Law no one had heard of before--the book of Deuteronomy. The theory is that Josiah and his priests and scribes composed this book to help justify his reasonable reforms.

Purpose/Identity Formation:

- Another alternative, that I prefer has a later dating of the book:
 - It's the only part of the Pentateuch that addresses the political structure of Israel, and when it does, it actually looks a lot like modern Democracy. It says that there *must* be judges and priests, but kings are optional. But, if they *must* have a king, he must be chosen by the people, not build up an empire and

riches for himself, not have a harem, and not make his status more than his brother.

- Deuteronomy is the most "Jesus-y" or progressive of the Pentateuchal books, if not the entire Old Testament.
 - It has a radical equality of slaves with their masters and women with men.
 - It give lots of preference to the poor, the orphan, and the widow
 - It focuses the Israel faith a whole lot more into the ethical and personal realm rather than the institutional and ceremonial (most of the "you"s in the book are second-person singular)
 - It doesn't discuss "worship services" as a function of priests and liturgy, but rather as joyful expressions and feasts to a redeeming God!
- There are *lots* of connections to the prophets, especially Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.
- Which lets me think that this is a post-exilic book, reflecting on the failure of the monarchy to bring true obedience and prosperity to God's people, and then it proposes what the "best" king might look like.
- You see, we will see this most explicitly in the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, but in the Hebrew mindset (even today), the way to be most "faithful" to your tradition is not to codify it and hold onto it as tightly as you can. Rather, it's to constantly be "updating" it in light of the wisdom and experience you've learned since you last visited it. This is what the Israelites did with their own stories and traditions in the Old Testament. They updated it in light of their experience as the people of God, in a way to shed light on where they've come since that original tradition was offered to them. This book is an example of that.
- In fact, I (and many of the commentaries I read) would argue that that is the main "point" of the book: you must learn to trust Yahweh and "update" your understanding of who he is and how he works in specific instances based on where you have come since then.

Interesting Bits:

- When Deuteronomy is applying the Ten Commandments to specific cases, it's really re-stating what God said on Sinai. Except, even

though it covers the same topics, it says contradictory things in its specifics.

Jesus/New Testament:

- The beginning and end of the main speech of the book, Speech 2, have to do with religious ceremony and worship. This reminds us that obedience to God has implications for every part of life, even the civil and political.
- Jesus explicitly seems to focus on Deuteronomistic law. It is his fulfillment of *this* articulation of the law that seems to guide his actions. As the Pharisees seem to stick to a "Leviticus"-sort-of faith, Jesus, continually emphasizes and obeys a "Deuteronomy"-sort-of faith. In fact, when faced with his temptation in the desert, where he officially sets himself on a different trajectory as Adam, he quote Deuteronomy to give him strength.
- There is a focus throughout the book, that's also clearly tapped into in Luke where one should focus on the cultivating the people of God, in order to benefit the whole world. It's a weird paradox, but it's in Deuteronomy and in the New Testament.
- The New Testament writers also do this "updating in light of new experience" when it came to Jesus. (The Reformers tried to re-embrace this in their mantra *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*, "the Church Reformed, is always reforming.")
- Jesus in the Garden and Moses on the Mountain: the reluctant death of one man is needed for the people to enter into the fullness of their redemption.

Application/Why Would You Go Here?:

- Deuteronomy 6-11 is part of the commentary expounding on the Ten Commandments, but focuses on the first one "you shall have no other gods before me". It expounds on this by preaching against three gods that may tempt Israel away from Yahweh: militarism, self-sufficient materialism, and self-righteous moralism.
- Deuteronomy gives us a model a for what life looks like under our God: a life marked by the need to anchor ourselves into the law of God, while constantly re-interpret the law and covenant of God based on our experience and wisdom as a community. Like a geographical compass, we are to plant one leg firmly in one spot and extend ourselves many other ways in order to live life fully.

- Politically, it reminds us that our trust can *not* be in *any* man-made authority or position (Mose's death becomes essential to the Israelites to show this). The king (or, the executive) is optional to our living int his world, but justice and faith are essential. Jesus refused to identify the "Kingdom of God" with any one institution.